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MODERN PRINCIPLES OF FOREIGN MISSIONS

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A new day has dawned in the work of the Church at home. There was a time, and not so very many years ago either, when the aim of the minister was the saving of individuals from sin here and from the danger of eternal suffering yonder. His work was frankly individualistic and comparatively little attention was paid to efforts for the betterment of material conditions or the enrichment of life. Patience, not progress, was the watchword. Now, however, it is recognized that the Church and Christians have duties other than those formerly emphasized. There has come a vision of brotherhood, and the great truth now stands out in almost startling clearness that men must rise or fall together, that the great social forces, which often prevent men from full self-realization, must be transformed until they secure for all men the fullest, richest life. The Church cannot rest content if it maintains its regular meetings for worship, or even if it retains its membership without diminution by death or withdrawal; unless at the same time it is reaching out for those without interest in spiritual things. It cannot permit conditions to prevail which condemn children to lives of ignorance or vice. It must be an influence for the infusion into all the life around it of new qualities of aspiration and achievement. It must affect vitally the whole community and be an integral part of the social life around it.

What has been the influence of this change of purpose and method at home upon the work of the Church abroad? We might rather ask the question, What has been the part played by work abroad in changing the spirit of that in the home land? Two beliefs are current. Some imagine that the methods of the foreign missionary are on a level with those of Jonathan Edwards; that while we are living in the day of the limited express train and the automobile, the work of Christians abroad is still in the age of the stage-coach. Others, who are aware of the breadth of the missionary work to-day, nevertheless suppose this to be a very recent

development. The fact is, that our representatives abroad left the stage-coach period long before the wildest imagination dreamed of traveling from New York to Chicago in eighteen hours. In fact, it may almost be said that the missionary leaders abroad never passed through the day of the coach.

President Henry Churchill King, of Oberlin, declared a year ago: "The clearly and consciously enriched conception of missions which belongs to the present day is not simply, perhaps not mainly, the result of changing theological or sociological convictions at home. It is the immediate result of the working out of the Christian idea on the mission field. Dr. Sidney L. Gulick is probably quite justified in saying: 'It would be a mistake to suppose that foreign missions first took on sociological forms of work and international value only after, and because of, the rise of sociological conceptions of man. On the contrary, although foreign missions started from a frankly individualistic theory of religion and salvation, the actual work was from the start practical and sociological. It would be truer to say that the Christian thought in regard to foreign missions has become sociological through observation of and reflection on what missions were actually doing than through the rise of sociological speculation along other lines of thought. Practice has always preceded theory, as it always does in the large. It is probably safe to say that the sociological conception of the function and value of foreign missions is more due to missionary experience than to the general sociological trend of modern science.'"

Not only, as Dr. Gulick puts it, was the work of missions "from the start practical and sociological," but it has been shown that from the beginning it was consciously and purposely so. The religious theory may have been frankly individualistic; not so the purpose. The modern missionary movement is hardly yet a century old in the United States, and those who inaugurated this great undertaking were men of broad vision. Their theology would seem to us to-day crude, to some even barbarous, it may be, but their aim was something far beyond the rescue of individuals here and there; they sought the transformation of whole nations and peoples and the Christianizing of social customs and institutions.

The oldest foreign missionary society in the United States is the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, which

was organized in 1810, sent out its first missionaries two years later, and within a generation had started work in each of the five great continents as well as in the island world of the Pacific. In what spirit were these men and women sent out? Not in any spirit of antagonism or hostility to other religions, but in the spirit of brotherly helpfulness. The instructions given to the first band of missionaries in 1812 included the following:

"You go, dear brethren, as the messengers of love, of peace, of salvation, to people whose opinions and customs, whose habits and manners, are widely different from those to which you have been used; and it will not only comport with the spirit of your mission, but be essential to its success, that, as far as you can, you conciliate their affection, their esteem, and their respect. You will, therefore, make it your care to preserve yourselves from all fastidiousness of feeling, and of deportment; to avoid every occasion of unnecessary offense, or disgust, to those among whom you may sojourn; and in regard to all matters of indifference, or in which conscience is not concerned, to make yourselves easy and agreeable to them.

"In teaching the Gentiles, it will be your business, not vehemently to declaim against their superstitions, but in the meekness and gentleness of Christ, to bring them as directly as possible to the knowledge of divine truth."

As early as 1837, the ultimate goal was declared to be to "rear up native churches, place them under the care of capable native elders ordained over them, [and] furnish them with ample self-propagating gospel instrumentalities at the earliest possible period." To this end the board explored mission fields, translated, printed, and distributed books, sought to educate people, instruct them in reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, and other sciences, as well as in the doctrines on Christianity. Missionaries to Hawaii were in 1837 told that they were to lead the people up "into a reading, thinking, cultivated state of society, with all its schools and seminaries, its arts and institutions."

It must be admitted that loyalty to these high aims has not been always observed, that narrower counsels have at times prevailed, and that out of the thousands of missionaries sent forth from America, to say nothing of Great Britain, some have been men of too small calibre and too limited training to cope successfully,

upon this broad plane, with the great problems of mission fields. Yet the leaders in the movement have, almost without exception, been men of large views, and sociologists have come to recognize in not a few of the religious leaders in the Orient fellow-workers in the cause of science. A missionary to India declared recently that from three-fourths to nine-tenths of the missionary problem there was sociological.

What, then, are some of the principles recognized by missionary leaders, which show that they are abreast of and in sympathy with the sociological thought of to-day?

They believe that cultures and religions are transferable. There are sociologists who maintain that each nation must work out its intellectual and social, as well as its religious, salvation for itself, and that in this process there should be no interference from without. All recognize the truth which lies at the basis of this. A civilization cannot be plucked up bodily from one country, transplanted to another, and by magic made to take root at once and flourish without modification or change. Only rarely can a full grown tree be transferred to a new environment without danger. Seeds, however, can be made to grow in soils thousands of miles from their birthplace, and by processes of grafting new vigor and beauty may be given to fruit trees. In this manner strawberries have been introduced into North China, and the Gravenstein apple is destined to supplant the beautiful but tasteless Chinese apple; and that, too, it may be added, through the instrumentality of a missionary. So with civilizations. What is our virile Western civilization but the result of grafting upon the vigorous but undeveloped nations of Western Europe the culture of the Roman Empire, while in the comparative decadence of the Eastern churches is seen the result, in part at least, of an isolation which excluded new life from without. Japan itself, that modern wonder of the East, has in the past centuries, as well as within the last generation, shown a marvelous power of grafting into her own civilization elements of strength and variety obtained from others. Buddhism, founded by Gautama in India, spread thence to the East and is now indigenous among millions in Southeastern and Eastern Asia. There is, therefore, no scientific reason for holding that Christianity, which originally came from the Orient, should not find itself again in its own environment.

On the other hand, the missionary leaders clearly recognize that new forms of thought or activity cannot be imposed upon another in any mechanical, external, or superficial way. This is the cause of the failure of the Catholic Church centuries ago to Christianize Indian tribes in the southern extremity of the American continent. All that can be done is to plant the seed, foster it, and let it grow as it will, with the necessary modifications produced by the influence of its environment. This is recognized most clearly by missionary leaders. Western Christianity has been profoundly modified by the habits of thought of the West, as well as by the political and economic struggles of its followers. Its divisions are largely the outgrowth of its dissensions. Its polity is in harmony with the political habits and institutions of its adherents. To try to perpetuate abroad the results of our quarrels at home or to insist that ecclesiastical government shall take forms at variance with the political genius of a people, is a folly equaled only by an attempt to force the cannibals of some savage tribe in the South Seas to govern themselves in the manner of a New England village. Nothing is further from the thought of missionary leaders. It is all but universally recognized that the native Christian Church must ultimately be a self-governing church. Dr. Arthur J. Brown, secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, declared a year ago:

"And in the matter of the creed and government of the native church we must more clearly recognize the right of each autonomous body of Christians to determine certain things for itself. . . . In the course of nearly two thousand years, Christianity has undoubtedly taken on some of the characteristics of the white races, and missionaries, inheriting these characteristics, have more or less unconsciously identified them with the essentials. . . . How far is it proper for us to impose upon them our Western terminology and ecclesiastical forms? How far are we to be the judge of what it is necessary for other churches to accept? It is difficult for us to realize to what an extent our modes of theological thought and our forms of church polity have been influenced by our Western environment and the polemical struggles through which we have passed. The Oriental, not having passed through those particular controversies, knowing little and caring less about them, and having other controversies of his own, may not find our

forms and methods exactly suited to his needs. Let us give to him the same freedom that we demand for ourselves, and refrain from imposing on other peoples those features of Christianity that are purely racial. . . . Let the Asiatics accept Christ for themselves and develop for themselves the methods and institutions that result from His teaching. Let us have faith in our brethren and faith in God. . . . We should plant in non-Christian lands the fundamental principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and then give the native church reasonable freedom to make some adaptations for itself . . . The Bible was written for Asiatics and in an Asiatic language. Christ himself was an Asiatic. We of the West have, perhaps, only imperfectly understood that Asiatic Bible and Asiatic Christ, and it may be that by the guidance of God's Spirit upon the rising churches of Asia, a new and broader and more perfect interpretation of the gospel of Christ may be known to the world."

No other conclusion is possible. The numbers of the missionaries can never be sufficient to force upon the East views that do not commend themselves to the Oriental mind. Even the few who go farthest in urging upon the Church the duty of sending out large numbers of additional workers, hold up as the ideal one white missionary for every 25,000 of the population, and at present the forces are far below this figure. Suppose that the Buddhists of Siam should send to the city of Philadelphia a force of sixty missionaries to impose their tenets upon that city. This would be the number required to give one missionary to every 25,000. Would there be the slightest danger that the inhabitants of that city, estimated at a million and a half at the beginning of the year 1907, could be led by this small company to adopt generally any views which did not commend themselves as true and beneficial? Yet this is a proportion of propagandists far beyond that of the white Christian workers in the mission fields of the world. Moreover, the task of the Buddhist missionaries in influencing the more or less fickle population of any great American city would be child's play compared with that of the man from the West who tries to lead often a quarter of a million or more Orientals, conservative, suspicious of all that is foreign, and supremely self-satisfied, to adopt strange Western views; and it is equally evident that what success he has will be due in the end to the cordial acceptance of the new truth by its followers. In the elaboration of these views and their

application to local problems and conditions, the missionary is so far outnumbered by the native Christians that he could not, if he would, exert undue pressure upon those who have accepted the new doctrine and have received the new life. Moreover, the missionary does not seek to be the dominating force in the new Christian community. Increasingly it is recognized that the work must be carried on by the native Christians themselves; they are to be the evangelists to their own people. The man from the West is relegated more and more to a position of co-operation or even of subordination. For a time he will in new fields be the dominating force, but as there springs into existence the new Christian community, his influence proportionately diminishes. The work of educational leadership he often retains, but even here there are great educational institutions, notably the Doshisha in Japan, whose president is chosen from the constituency of the college itself. There are some who hold that ultimately the missionary from America will go to Japan or India, at the request of the Christian leaders there, to assist for a term of years, just as men like Gypsy Smith and Dr. F. B. Meyer are drafted into service in this country. Such brotherly co-operation is quite in accordance with the spirit of modern missions.

This view of missionary polity is no mere theory; it is already in practice. One of the best illustrations is in Japan, where the Kumiai churches, the outgrowth of the work of the American Board of Foreign Missions, have come to full self-support and self-direction. For a considerable period the mission has had no control over such churches as could support themselves, although its relation to those which needed help was different. Within the last few months this situation has changed and the support of every new church, which grows out of the efforts of the mission, is assumed by the Japanese Christians themselves. The Kumiai churches and the mission are co-ordinate bodies, working side by side, in cordial co-operation. The mission is doing pioneer work, but so are the native churches, and this they will increase as rapidly as their numbers and financial ability permit. In Ceylon the native churches of the American Board mission are entirely self-supporting and maintain their own missionary societies. The same is true among the Zulus of Natal, South Africa. Progress in this direction would be still more rapid were it not for two factors: the need of

trained native leadership and the frequent disinclination of the people to assume responsibility. No native church can be wisely allowed to assume autonomy unless it has leaders who are educated and trained to act wisely. In some instances the lack of such men has held back the native church for years. Hence it is seen how imperative it is to begin at the very earliest possible moment to train men to become future leaders. The other difficulty arises from the fact that in much of the Orient the people have never possessed self-government and have no desire for this, the dearest of possessions to the American; they would rather be dominated by some one than assume the responsibility themselves. It often takes long-continued, painstaking efforts to bring the Church to the point where, leaving behind the restrictions of childhood, it can emerge into manhood.

Thus the missionary leaders believe that a Christian civilization may become indigenous in Eastern lands, where it has only recently been planted. They also hold theoretically and practically to the broadest conception of what this work of missions implies.

In the home land, as already noted, it is generally admitted that the duty of the Church is not confined to rescuing individuals from evil lives and from the danger of future suffering, but that it should seek the enrichment and transformation of men here and now, as well as the establishment of social relations upon the basis of justice and brotherhood. Hence the churches are entering into lines of activity which are designed to give the community the possibility of broad, normal lives. Kindergartens, gymnasiums, classes of various sorts, lectures, concerts, and other social entertainments are all included among the instrumentalities which are used by the Church. A church which does not concern itself with the interests of its natural constituency and seek to offer to outsiders that which is lacking and which will appeal to their sense of need is rapidly becoming an anomaly. The social ministrations of the Church are recognized as an essential part of its activity, even though the unique function of the Church remains spiritual in the best sense.

What is true in America is equally true abroad. In fact, our new forms of work were long ago seized upon by the missionary as valuable agencies. Dr. James L. Barton, foreign secretary of the oldest foreign mission board in this country, in a public address

a year and a half ago, declared it to be the duty of the missionary to interpret the gospel "into terms as broad as the activities, experiences, and aspirations of men, and make it vital to every phase of human society as well as to the needs of the individual soul." To this end, he maintained, the missionary must preach and propagate the gospel of physical cleanliness and sanitation, of physical perfection, of industry, of a sane, pure society, of brotherly love, of good works, of intellectual development, of justice, equality, and common rights, of human sin, and of redemption for the entire man here and hereafter. This varied work costs money, especially in the beginning, and hence in no one field can all be done that is called for. It is equally true that the needs of Japan, for example, are very different from those of India, and these in turn different from those of the primitive tribes of Central Africa or the South Seas. There is little demand for medical work in Japan, for the Japanese are to-day in the van of medical and surgical progress—though it should be added that modern medicine was introduced into Japan by the missionary. Neither does it need industrial training. On the other hand, the millions in China, among whom there is so much terrible suffering and practically nothing worthy of the name of medical science, call loudly for the work of the physician and nurse, and the outcast hordes of India, forbidden by the rules of caste to enter into any lucrative occupation, may be lifted by industrial training from lives of almost incredible poverty to the plane of comfort.

While the work varies with the field and with the type of worker from abroad, taking the mission field as a whole, we find five clearly defined types of work: that of evangelism, education, industrial training, medical training and relief, and publication; to which might well be added a sixth, that of social service. The evangelistic spirit pervades the whole work, for it is seen abroad as well as at home, that there is need of awakening new impulses. planting new purposes in a man, before he can be led to any high development. At the same time, the peoples in mission lands are held back by burdens of sorrow, evil, superstition, or fatalistic beliefs which can best be removed by the acceptance of the good news and fuller life of the Christian religion. Yet while this is true, increasing emphasis is placed upon the other lines of work.

No community can be what it should be so long as the per-

centage of illiteracy is high and there are no trained leaders. The mission seeks to meet this need and the people of the West are supporting a system of education which reaches from the kindergarten up through the common, the high, and the boarding school, to the college and university. The best educated class in every illiterate country is usually the Christian community, and there have already sprung out of this work men and women who are capable of leading their people to better things. Many of these are Christians, some of them have not nominally changed their religion, but they all, with few exceptions, have their faces turned towards the future and are guiding all those whose intelligence has been quickened and who are willing to follow in the path indicated.

One great curse of most Eastern lands is the low standard of living, the industrial inefficiency of the people, and the unequal distribution of wealth. In Africa and many other regions the men regard manual labor as degrading and are content if they can have wives to till the soil and minister to their wants. Through industrial training the missionary is seeking to remove this curse and to make possible a community which can support itself upon a standard of living immeasurably higher than has ever been known. The value of this work in India is recognized by government, which helps to maintain these agencies for increasing industrial efficiency.

The lack of a medical science worthy of the name entails needless suffering, costs millions of lives, and increases poverty. These results are also brought about by the unspeakably filthy conditions in which millions live. This is another need which the missionary is trying to meet. He relieves suffering through hospital and dispensary, he checks the ravages of plague through vaccination and various measures of sanitation, and he trains native physicians and nurses to do this work for their own people. The graduates in medicine of the Syrian Protestant College at Beirut are found throughout Turkey. The medical missionaries are contributing to medical science and performing operations of which any surgeon in this country would be proud.

It is not enough to teach people to read, they must have something to read; a vernacular literature is a prime requisite for an intelligent community. In many countries the missionary has been compelled to reduce the language to writing, prepare grammars and dictionaries, and begin from the start the formation of a literature

of any sort. In other lands there is a large literature, but quite generally it is in a language unknown except to a few. It is also often the case that much of the present literature, whether in an ancient language or in the vernacular, is of a degrading type, which cannot be tolerated by a Christian civilization. To supplant such literature where it exists and to furnish books of information as well as inspiration is the effort of the missionary who spends time in literary work. It should be noted that the productions of the mission presses and the books and pamphlets prepared by the missionary are by no means exclusively religious. Text books for schools and books of science are constantly brought out, and only lack of funds hinders the preparation of a much broader literature. Best of all, in many places an indigenous native vernacular literature is appearing.

Under the head of social service there can be found abroad nearly every line of work that is seen in the United States. Each mission station is virtually a settlement. The missionary studies conditions and seeks to become a center of helpfulness to all around. In Japan, Miss Adams, of Osaka, went to live in a slum district, and has succeeded, by the use of settlement methods, in transforming the region, according to the testimony of the police and other officials. The apostle of prison reform in this same island empire was a missionary. Missionaries rescue orphans, train the deaf, dumb, and blind, care for lepers and the victims of opium, protest against the prevalence of great moral evils, and secure their restraint or suppression. While scrupulously avoiding all interference with questions of government, they stand everywhere for justice, honesty, and square dealing by government or individual, for the suppression of corruption of whatever sort, and for the principles of the brotherhood of nations. They are often the counselors of native officials who desire the progress of their people. In many instances a mission has taken a people ignorant and degraded and has gradually led them on until they have been actually organized into self-governing Christian communities, which in many respects would put to shame us of America. Uganda is a standing example of what missionary work of the broad sort can accomplish within a generation. Native rulers and government officials constantly testify to the value of the work of the missionary.

Such are some of the principles upon which the great leaders

of the missionary movement are now working. An acquaintance with the social sciences is being insisted upon more and more as a necessary preparation for missionary work, and missionaries are here and there making real contributions to sociology, notably Dr. Arthur H. Smith, of China. The missionary movement abroad, as carried on by the great American mission boards, is increasingly in harmony with scientific principles, and will soon be able to point out the path, if it has not already done so, towards greater efficiency for the Church at home.